IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims and add new claims 17 and 18 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for producing a blank for a component of laser active quartz glass, **said method** comprising ~~the following steps~~:

a) providing a dispersion with a solids content of at least 40% by wt. which contains SiO_2 nanopowder and dopants, including a cation of **one or more** ~~the~~ rare earth metals or ~~of the~~ transition metals in a liquid,

b) granulation by moving the dispersion with withdrawal of moisture until ~~the formation of~~ a doped SiO_2 granulate of spherical porous granulate grains having a moisture content of less than 35% by wt. and a density of at least 0.95 g/cm^3 **is formed**,

c) drying and purifying the SiO_2 granulate by heating **said SiO_2 granulate** to a temperature of at least 1000°C **so as to form** ~~with formation of~~ doped porous SiO_2 granules having an OH content of less than 10 ppm, and

d) sintering or melting the doped SiO_2 granules in a reducing atmosphere **so as to form** ~~with formation of~~ the blank of doped quartz glass, including a gas pressure sintering, which comprises the following steps:

aa) heating the SiO_2 granules to a melting temperature of at least 1600°C while applying and maintaining a negative pressure;

bb) holding **the SiO_2 granules** at the melting temperature at an overpressure ranging from 5 bar to 15 bar for a melting period of at least 30 min **so as**

to form ~~with formation of~~ the quartz glass blank;

cc) cooling the quartz glass blank while maintaining said ~~an~~ overpressure.

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ an initial solids content of at least 50% by wt. is set in the dispersion.

3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO_2 granulate obtained according to step b) has a BET surface area ranging from 40 m^2/g to 70 m^2/g.

4. (currently amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO_2 granulate obtained according to step b) has a BET surface area of at least 50 m^2/g.

5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the spherical porous granulate grains have a grain size of less than 500 µm.

6. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO_2 granulate is dried and purified in ~~under~~ a chlorine-containing atmosphere.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the SiO_2 granulate is dried and purified at a temperature of at least 1050°C.

8. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the drying and purifying of the porous granulate is performed in ~~under~~ an oxygen-containing atmosphere.

9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the porous SiO_2 granules obtained according to step c) have an OH content of less than

one wt ppm.

10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, **wherein** ~~**characterized in that**~~ the porous SiO_2 granules obtained according to step c) have a BET surface area of less than 20 m^2/g.

11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, **wherein** ~~**characterized in that**~~ the SiO_2 granules are thermally densified prior to step d).

12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, **wherein** ~~**characterized in that**~~ the quartz glass blank is annealed at a temperature of at least 1120°C for a retention period of at least 40 **hours** ~~h~~.

13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, **wherein** ~~**characterized in that**~~ the SiO_2 granules according to step d) are molten in a mold.

14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, **wherein** ~~**characterized in that**~~ the SiO_2 blank according to step d) is three-dimensionally homogenized.

15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, **wherein characterized in that** a bulk body with a radially inhomogeneous refractive index distribution is formed from SiO_2 granules of different refractive index, and ~~**that**~~ the bulk body is sintered or molten to obtain the SiO_2 blank.

16. (currently amended) **A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing** ~~**Use of**~~ an SiO_2 blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, **and incorporating said SiO_2 blank into** ~~**as**~~ a core material for a fiber ~~**laser, as an optical filter or as a cladding tube for**~~ laser **and transmitting said laser light**

through said fiber.

17. (new) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing an SiO_2 blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, and incorporating said SiO_2 blank into an optical filter; and transmitting said laser light through said optical filter.

18. (new) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing an SiO_2 blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, and incorporating said SiO_2 blank into a cladding tube for a fiber; and transmitting said laser light through said fiber.